

Voters Reject New Cohasset Fire Station

Article 24, which requested an appropriation of \$625,000 for construction and equipping a new sub fire station on Rte. 3A, was voted down Saturday, 157 to 67.

John Reardon of the Fire Station Study Committee said the committee was embarrass-

ed to be bringing such a high cost before the Town Meeting but explained that construction costs had gone up drastically in the past year.

Reardon said that alternative sites were looked for but couldn't be found. The Route 3A site, which is located on 1.5

Saturday T.M.

acres of land on the northeasterly side of the highway, would be the consolidation of the outdated North Cohasset

and Beechwood stations, and would provide better coverage for all the people, in each part of town, he said.

As it is, he continued, the town is being poorly served and advised against putting all the eggs in one basket" with additional expansion of the Elm Street Fire Station. The 3A site would also allow the moving of the ambulance to a more central location. The fire chiefs of cooperating towns Hull, Hingham and Scituate, Reardon noted, endorsed the Study Committee.

"There are no suitable alternatives available at a reasonable price. It is a problem that won't go away, don't play ostrich," he said.

The Advisory Board took a negative stance on the article. "The cost increased 60 per cent over what it would cost last year," Chairman Patrick Hurley said. "Get this figure down to what it was last year."

The Capital Budget Committee Chairman Richard Avery stressed "personal responsibility" as a recourse to "runaway inflation." "If fire-fighting is going to be an expense, rewire, take care of your home," he urged. The Committee suggested a lower cost option.

Fire Chief Charles Piepenbrink said that if the article were voted down, the present fire station would suffer from an extreme lack of space. "It isn't physically possible to service the town with the two

pumping engines we have at the Elm Street station. We can't house another engine there. It's hard to get up here and beg with you," Piepenbrink said.

Honorary town engineer Gilbert Tower, a fire chief of years past, felt the new station wasn't necessary. "Cohasset is a small town, the present station can meet the town's need within 10 minutes of a fire alarm — that is time enough." Tower also suggested spending the money proposed for a new station on smoke detectors.

Architect for the station James Fitzgerald described the proposed station as very simple. "People are not accustomed to the cost of construction," he said, "and it's going to go up."

Town Accountant William Signorelli said the total cost of the station would be \$1,035,156 if financed for 20 years at 6 1/4 per cent. The impact on the tax rate would be 70 cents the first year and 33 cents the last year.

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